



FACT SHEET

Oregon Arts Commission/Oregon Cultural Trust Joint Governance and Semi-Independence Process April 2025

The leadership of the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust have been exploring the concept of joint governance and semi-independent status for several years, beginning with a feasibility study in 2018.

After additional studies, research and a facilitated working group process, the boards of both agencies – with support from the Governor’s Office and leadership of the Oregon Business Development Department (Business Oregon) – voted unanimously to support the concept and to move forward with bill drafting. The bill, [HB 3048](#), is under consideration by the Legislature in the 2025 session.

In pursuing joint governance and semi-independent status, the boards agreed on the following opportunities and advancements:

- Clarify shared arts and culture mission and programs;
- Provide greater impact for constituency and communities;
- Combine advocacy efforts to raise the profile of arts and culture;
- Focus communications to demonstrate the value and economic impact of the entire arts and culture field;
- Provide streamlined focused direction with one strategic plan, a unified work plan, and fewer board meetings;
- Allow combined data to create a stronger case for funding;
- Eliminate confusion between grant makers;
- Provide a direct path to communicating with the Governor’s Office and setting legislative priorities;
- Give greater strategic focused oversight to a unified Board;
- Ensure Board representation includes arts, heritage, humanities and historic preservation partners expertise;

- Strengthen authority to direct resources, including staffing, and enhance budgetary flexibility to be nimble and make best uses of resources; and
- Provide ability to seek efficiencies by either performing services internally or contracting out (e.g. bookkeeping; financial reporting; accounts payable; billing; human resources; payroll/benefits; IT systems and services; and purchasing and contracting).

The bill-drafting framework approved by the boards also included the following assumptions:

- A nine-member board appointed by the Governor which reflects the geographical and cultural diversity of the state, plus two ex officio members from the House and Senate;
- Membership of the new board shall include at least one member with expertise in each of the following areas: heritage, historic preservation, humanities, arts and museums;
- Recognition that the new agency will need to receive General Funds to remain eligible to receive federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts;
- Retention of the funding distribution plan for Cultural Trust grantmaking;
- Retention of all programs and services currently operated by the Arts Commission and Cultural Trust;
- Protection and retention of the current Cultural Trust brand;
- Retention of the Cultural Tax Credit and cultural license plate programs;
- Retention of the Cultural Trust Permanent Fund; and
- Intent that all current staff will transfer to the new agency and continue to be eligible for PERS with access to comparable benefits.

If HB 3048 is enacted by the Legislature, the Arts Commission and Cultural Trust – in partnership with the Governor’s Office and Business Oregon – would have two years to develop an implementation plan, develop new internal systems and processes, and submit the final action plan to the Legislature. During this time there would not be any interruption of grant programs and/or services currently offered.

The new semi-independent unified agency would technically be named the Oregon Arts and Cultural Development Office, with a more engaging “doing business as” name to be developed. The new agency would be operational on July 1, 2027.

The Arts Commission and Cultural Trust are dedicated to engaging all stakeholders in this process. Several informational sessions have been conducted and more are being scheduled.

We encourage you to participate in the informational sessions. Please contact Communications Manager [Carrie Kikel](#) for details.

